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# NEWS
## FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

*Know your Museum better*

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## WHO WILL IT BE?

Some day in March the five millionth visitor to the Royal Ontario Museum (since its opening in 1914) will pass through the turnstile. Will it be a distinguished scholar from China who comes to study the Museum's world-famous collection of Chinese antiquities; a Norwegian airman paying his farewell visit before going to the fighting front; a British sailor from one of the minesweepers being built in Ontario for the Royal Navy; a child, one of the many thousands who come each year to learn about the fascinating treasures in Ontario's Wonder House; or will it be you?

### IT'S TIME TO GET UP

Have you heard the story about the man who suffered so much from insomnia that he could not sleep even when it was time to get up? It expresses feelingly man's reluctance to crawl from his warm bed. The past winter has made this daily obligation even less attractive. One can almost envy the woodchuck his ability to slumber through an entire winter in his snug retreat.

March ends the woodchuck's winter sleep. "Any time now," says S. C. Downing of the Royal Ontario Museum, "woodchucks in our latitude will come forth from their winter quarters." If the weather turns cold and blustery the early risers will snatch another "forty winks." But as each day lengthens and temperatures climb, the woodchuck becomes thoroughly aroused. Eventually he comes out to have a look around at the new year. Watch for him on the snow-free patches of March fields and hillsides.

### PRE-GARDENING PREPARATION

At this season of the year John Citizen becomes interested in seed catalogues and garden plans. It's an old Ontario custom. According to K. E. Kidd, of the Royal Ontario Museum, dreams concerned with gardening are also in the minds of our neighbours, the Iroquois Indians. According to their legends this is the season when a strange little race of agricultural spirits hurries westward to plant gardens on the other side of the earth. There they grow giant corn, squashes and beans equal to, or exceeding, those promised in our seed catalogues.

The little spirit people, known by the Indian as "Bushy Heads" or "Husk Faces," are harbingers of spring. On their westward journey they like to visit the Indians, dance with them and eat popcorn. To make such occasions seem more real, the Iroquois people make masks of corn husks after the alleged likeness of the little spirits. These they wear at the springtime ceremonies.

Mr. Kidd has arranged a new exhibit in the Museum showing excellent specimens of Iroquois masks. Perhaps there's an idea in this display for the Ontario gardener. It may start a new fad. If you don't recognize your neighbour getting out his garden tools next door, look sharply, he may be wearing a "Husk Face" mask for luck.

### MUSEUM HOURS

Open Week Days except Monday 10.00 a.m to 5.00 p.m.;
Sundays 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

## SNOW "FLEAS" A MINOR NUISANCE

Workers in the maple woods during the "sugaring" season sometimes find dusky patches on the newly fallen snow. Examination discloses that the patches are formed by countless thousands of small, jumping insects. These insects are commonly referred to as snow "fleas." According to Dr. F. A. Urquhart of the Royal Ontario Museum, they are not related to fleas at all and should be called "springtails."

Spring-tails are active throughout the year beneath the bark of fallen logs. During the maple sugar season the sun is sufficiently strong to warm the log in which they are living and the insects venture forth and are found on the snow. Although they are a nuisance in maple sugar camps, because they get into the sap, they are otherwise harmless. The name "spring-tail" has been applied to them because they do possess a spring-like "tail." This is a mechanism which permits the insect to jump and because they jump they have been misnamed "fleas."

### EDUCATION, ONE JOB OF MUSEUM

Briefly, the job of a modern museum is to preserve objects pertaining to science and culture, to study them, and to make the special knowledge thus acquired, common knowledge. The dissemination of knowledge is therefore an important function of your museum, the Royal Ontario Museum.

### SOBER REFLECTION

We had imbibed nothing, yet there beneath a specimen of mineral in the Royal Ontario Museum, a sample of writing appeared in double image. Why? "When a beam of light passes through some minerals," said Dr. V. B. Meen, "it is broken into two beams which travel along diverging paths. The divergence of these paths is greater in some minerals than in others. Iceland Spar, the mineral you have examined, a very clear variety of calcite, produces the greatest divergence of all. Hence, when you view an object through it, you see double," concluded Dr. Meen.

Because of this property, Iceland Spar is used in many types of optical equipment. The early production came from Iceland, but this deposit is no longer operated. Small quantities are obtained from various parts of the world.

### THE GOOD THAT MEN DO

There are many kinds of monuments that perpetuate the memory of men. Marble shafts crumble away or become objects of impersonal curiosity. City streets may bear their names. Though the name remains for the thoroughfare the connection with the illustrious citizen is lost. Some men, unconsciously, erect more enduring, more valuable memorials for themselves. Many of the collections in the Royal Ontario Museum are monuments to such men. One public spirited individual was interested in building a collection of prints; another, minerals; another, fossils; and another, study specimens of birds and a zoological library. As long as people study prints, or minerals, or fossils, or birds, or books; as long as there are museums such as the Royal Ontario Museum, the names of these men will be known and remembered with gratitude.